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FROM: Raimond J. Salenicks/John Carson
CLIENT CODE: CARTRON.001A
PAGES: 3 (INCLUDING THIS SHEET)
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MESSAGE:

My assistant, Jan Sands, called you several weeks ago to set up an interview for John Carson of our firm. You indicated that you would like an Agenda for the interview before making an appointment. Attached is our Agenda for Personal Interview. Please call me to let me know if you could meet with Mr. Carson at any of the followings times: January 31 at 9 a.m. or 3:30 p.m.; February 1 at 9 a.m. or anytime after 3:00 p.m. My telephone number is (619) 687-8669. Thank you for your consideration.

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Attorney Docket No.: CARTRON.001A
Application No.: 09/153,912
Filing Date: September 16, 1998
Examiner: Matsuichiro Shimizu
Art Unit: 2635

Agenda for Personal Interview

Proposed changes for the claims:

Claim 1. A cart return system for use by a store utilizing a computer, the system comprising:

a detection loop arranged at the entrance to a cart return location;
a loop oscillator circuit connected to the detection loop; and
a processing circuit, connected to the loop oscillator circuit, being capable of detecting a change in inductance of the loop and identifying a cart return condition in response to the loop oscillator circuit, wherein the processing circuit is [capable of providing] adapted to provide a customer identification code to the computer, wherein the customer identification code is unique to each customer.

The amendments are not narrowing, but are purely for clarification purposes.

For each additional independent Claim 10, 19, 31, 41, we propose to add the clause "wherein the customer identification code is unique to each customer".

Discussion of Unger Reference

Unger describes a cart return system but does not describe any relationship with a store utilizing a computer. The third element of Claim 1 recites "a processing circuit... providing a customer identification code to the computer". The logics and detector shown in Figure 2 cannot be both the processing circuit and the computer. Unger, at most, shows "the entrance of a cart return location" and "a processing circuit" without the other limitations.

Discussion of Buckens Reference

4623877 The Buckens reference is directed to a theft detection system for merchandise having an affixed magnetic strip material. Buckens shows a cart loaded with merchandise where the merchandise is the subject of detection and not the cart. The Examiner stated that Unger and Buckens are in the same field of endeavor of object detection system.

✓ In Buckens, the receiver antenna coils (50, 52) are connected serially to a complicated circuit (shown in Figures 6a,b,c) which has an oscillator (62). Buckens does not describe a change in inductance of the receiver antenna coils, but requires that the receiver produce electrical currents.

Applicant's "loop oscillator circuit" is connected in parallel to the detection loop and does not contain an oscillator component. It is called a loop oscillator circuit because a cart passing over or by the detection loop causes an oscillation in the loop circuit due to the change of inductance of the loop. This generates a change of frequency of the loop oscillator circuit. The

processing circuit detects the change in frequency (inductance) to detect the presence of the cart by the loop. See page 12 of the specification and Fig. 12.

Discussion of Amdahl et al. Reference

Specific
The Examiner stated that Amdahl is in the art of cart management system. The Examiner stated that the processor (152) of Amdahl is capable of providing a customer identification code to the computer (col. 17, lines 49-58, card reader provides customer id to the computer) as an additional customer information for cart management system.

The text at col. 17 refers to credit card verification from a remote site via an optional modem. The processor (152) most likely receives just an indication that funds to rent the cart have been received in one form or another (bills, coins, credit) and thus, the processor never gets a customer ID (credit card number). It could be a liability to store customer credit card numbers at the processors (which are at unprotected locations, e.g., airport parking lots) for security reasons.

Discussion of Larson et al. Reference

The Examiner stated that Larson is in the art of identification system. Regarding dependent Claims 6 and 9, the Examiner stated that Larson discloses that the *processing circuit includes a customer identification device* that provides the customer identification code responsive to the cart return condition (col. 5, lines 40-54, an activated key issued by the cashier for reward upon returning cart; an activated key is customer ID) to provide reward for returning cart. However, there is no apparent reason why Unger would need the teachings of Larson since Unger provides an immediate reward (through a dispenser) for returning a cart. Furthermore, Larson does not seem to show that the activated key (magnetic paper or plastic credit card type device) having embedded tracking information is directly indicative of a customer identification. Moreover, it doesn't make sense to say that the *processing circuit includes a customer identification device (CID)* if the CID is a card.

Claim 7 recites that the customer identification device is a card reader. In the Claim 6 rejection, the Examiner stated that the customer identification device is the activated key (paper or plastic card) which is not congruent.

Combining the References

The Unger system does not need the Buckens receiver antenna coils connected to the circuit having an oscillator to improve the Unger photo diode apparatus. The Unger reference does not provide any motivation for needing or including the Buckens method of detecting a piece of magnetic material on merchandise. The Unger system can detect specific cart types by counting the number of upright members. The Unger reference further described adding a plate blocking some of the uprights so that only carts from a particular store are accepted. Unger and Buckens solve completely different problems of cart and merchandise detection.

The Unger system does not need either the Amdahl system or the Larson system because there is no need for a customer identification. The Unger apparatus provides a reward immediately upon detecting a cart properly returned to the holding pen.